

UNIVERSITATEA BABEȘ-BOLYAI, CLUJ-NAPOCA

Școala Doctorală “Didactică. Tradiție. Inovație, Dezvoltare”

**HABILITATION THESIS
SCIENCES OF EDUCATION**

**Educational management and professional
development of the teaching staff:
approaches and perspectives in education
in Romania**

ABSTRACT

Candidat:

Conf. univ. dr. Marius Claudiu Langa

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The habilitation thesis, entitled “Educational management and professional development of the teaching staff: approaches and perspectives in education in Romania”, summarizes the scientific, academic and professional achievements of the post-doctoral period, starting with the year when I was awarded the scientific title of Doctor in the field of Educational Sciences in 2008 and up to the current year, 2024.

Structurally, the thesis is divided into three chapters.

Chapter 1 describes the evolution of my academic, scientific, and professional career, highlighting previous significant professional achievements, bordered by my research and teaching activity, as well as my involvement in research teams within institutional projects. The presentation of these aspects of my professional career is grounded on the main stages in my professional development: initial and continuous training, and my career development.

Chapter 2 details the main research guidelines in accordance with the objectives of my professional development, through three fields: educational management, professional development of the teaching staff, and early childhood education in Romania. In the elaboration of the thesis, I aim to thoroughly highlight my scientific and academic results based on three sustainable directions in my professional development.

The first direction - **(Re)configurations in the educational management field** - demonstrates my early interests in scientific documentation and analysis. The studies focus on the management of conflicts within school organizations, highlighting strategies to prevent and reduce conflict in the educational groups, but also within the school organization, as operational approaches in educational management (Donohue & Kolt, 1992; Pânișoara, 2003; Down, Smyth, 2012; Demir, 2015). Recent analyzes in this line of action (Răduț-Taciu, Bocoș, Chiș, 2015; Bush, 2016; Senge, 2016) highlight the challenges that the social, technological, and economic system imposes on the Romanian school, thus outlining a new approach of the educational management. The idea of the “learning organization” (Senge, 2016) claims that the educational institution can be developed through the learning process which means that all the school members – the teaching staff, the students – must express their aspirations, to expand their knowledge and develop their skills by building collaborative networks, where the organization’s goals are fully assumed.

The second direction - **Professional development of the teaching staff** – is regarded as a process that takes shape in the educational context, where the focus on competence and the integration of modern communication and information technologies in education as central themes of the conceptual and operational analyses. The unprecedented development of contemporary society, the accelerated pace of globalization, the demographic aging and the rapid pace of technological development require changes in

ensuring the quality of education by stimulating the teaching staff to permanently develop their skills, in accordance with the current and future requirements of the society, to update and expand the thematic contents in the specific practice of the teaching profession. In Romania, the diagnosis of the educational system highlighted the need to restructure the teacher training system by reorganizing training standards and training results in different contexts, formal and non-formal, with an emphasis on the development of professional mentoring networks.

The subchapter brings integrative conceptual delimitations in several directions of major educational interest, namely: the development of professional and transversal skills (time resource management skills, research skills), the development of students' academic behavior, the advantages offered by digitization from the perspective of the adaptation of the educational context to the training needs of students and teachers. Also, this section brings to attention the importance of the continuous professional development of the teaching staff, emphasizing aspects regarding the permanent development of the system of professional skills. (Tucker, Umpherey, 2013; Ding, Wei, Molohan, 2014; Sun, Shute, Steward, Yonehiro, Duran, D'Mello, 2019; Crețu, 2019)

In the field of education, a transition to new paradigms is observed, with a direct impact on the learning process. This change is marked by the shift from content-focused approaches to skills-oriented ones. In this new perspective, the focus is on the identification and integration of contents in a way that serves as effective tools for stimulating the cognitive process, thus avoiding the fragmentation of knowledge in favour of the development of functional skills. Therefore, current education capitalizes on the instrumental value of the contents, valorizes them as starting bases in complex training and training efforts, by capitalizing on their informative and formative values. "To be a teacher, you have to be a prophet – because you are trying to prepare people for a world that will be thirty or fifty years in the future" (Gordon Brown in Senge, 2016, p. 71)

In the next part of the chapter, I outline another direction of research, **contributions to the refounding of early childhood education in Romania**. The chapter offers theoretical perspectives on the necessity and importance of early childhood education as an educational approach, but, above all, it highlights my involvement in the implementation of strategic projects for the development of the early childhood education system, of institutional and operational measures undertaken at the national level for the training of human resources and the development of educational policies addressed to the preschool and ante-preschool segment. The extensive interest in this field in recent years is justified by the development of

numerous national/European policies and strategies to ensure specialized intervention at the young ages of children, but also by the multiplication of interdisciplinary studies in the field of early education. (Sharples, 2000; Hendricks, 2009; Brazelton, Greenspan, 2013; Sujani, 2022).

In **Chapter 3** of the present habilitation thesis, I describe the professional, scientific and academic career development proposal, highlighting the main directions and areas of interest aimed at increasing my professional, scientific and academic visibility at a national and international level, and also at contribution to an increased institutional visibility. In drawing up the development plan, the main stages of my initial training and continuous development in my university and managerial career are considered, as well as the thematic areas that define my scientific and specialized research contributions, with an emphasis on the current main professional and scientific results and on the anticipated ones, starting from my interests in theoretical and applied educational research. In accordance with these, I highlight the professional, scientific, and academic career development directions for the next period, through medium and long-term objectives, in 3 main directions (scientific activity, development of institutional projects, coordination of mixed research teams). Also, to outline my professional path, I design some research topics for doctoral studies, to share my scientific expertise and facilitate the academic development of future specialists in the field of educational sciences.